

101 DAYS OF SUMMER

From Memorial Day through the Labor Day holidays, we enjoy many summer activities, but this is also a critical time for mishaps. In fact, more injuries and fatalities occur during these 101 days than for the rest of the year. Prevention means using the same safe work practices and attitude we use on the job in our off-job activities. The following information provides a variety of safety tips to help protect you from common hazards of the season.

PREPARING YOUR VEHICLE FOR SUMMER & VACATION

- Summer means temperatures really start to heat up so it's a good idea to have your vehicle checked out by an automotive service professional, especially before going on a summer vacation trip.
- Do your own pre-trip inspection - check hoses, belts, radiator fluid and oil levels, wiper blades, tire pressure and tread wear, brake lights and turn signals.
- Know where the jack and spare tire are located and how to use them.

SUMMERTIME DRIVING TIPS

- Plan the route from your home to your vacation destination to help avoid confusion on the road.
- Buckle Up For Safety
- Expect heavy traffic during summer travel that includes sudden stops, abrupt lane changes and distracted drivers. Also remember warm weather shortens attention spans and tolerance of other drivers. Try to maintain your composure to keep from getting angry at other drivers so you can think clearly and use your defensive driving skills to stay safe
- Avoid distractions such as by a cell phone or by items or other people in your vehicle.
- Always maintain a safe following distance and drive at a speed safe for the conditions and traffic level.
- Be cautious at all intersections. Don't run yellow (or red) lights. Be sure all traffic is actually stopped and the intersection is clear before pulling out on a green light.
- Finally, never drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. While many summertime activities often involve drinking socially, driving definitely isn't one of them.

PREVENTING SUNBURN & OTHER HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

- Sunburn is the most common of the various heat-related illnesses experienced in the summer. Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation causes sunburn - the longer the exposure, the worse the burn.
- Help prevent skin cancer by using a sunscreen with a rating of 30 SPF. People with fairer skin should use a higher SPF rating. Reapply often, especially after swimming or sweating, especially children.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing that covers the skin to provide even more protection. A wide brim hat also helps protect those frequently burned areas at the top of our head, ears, nose, and forehead.
- Wear sunglasses with UV filter protection to reduce strain and from harming your eyes.

- Heat stress and heat stroke (other heat-related illnesses) are more serious than sunburn; they can cause severe illness or death. Know how to prevent, recognize symptoms and treat these heat-related ailments.
- In order to keep cool in the heat, your body has to sweat. By sweating you can lose up to a quart of water per hour. For your body to be able to keep cooling properly you should drink as much fluid as you lose, whether you're thirsty or not. Proper hydration can prevent the onset of serious heat-related illnesses.
- If your body becomes dehydrated its cooling system cannot keep up with the heat, leading to heat exhaustion. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include profuse sweating, rapid breathing and blurred vision. People may also become agitated and make poor decisions such as refusing assistance.
- Heat stroke, a very serious condition, occurs when the body's cooling system completely shuts down. This causes the body's core temperature to increase rapidly. Symptoms of heat stroke include hot, dry skin. The skin is dry because the victim has lost the ability to sweat. They may also be delirious or go into convulsions. If left untreated, brain damage and death will occur as the body temperature continues to rise. If this occurs, call for immediate medical help. Quickly move the victim to a cooler location and douse with a steady flow of cool water until help arrives. If they are conscious encourage drinking small amounts of cool water.

SUMMER SPORTS

- First, warm up and stretch your muscles before participating in any type of sport. Proper warm up and stretching can prevent injury.
- Perhaps most importantly, stay within your limits. Many summer outings include pick-up games such as volleyball, kickball, soccer or softball. Many of us do not play these sports regularly and our bodies may not be conditioned for the running, diving or sliding that may occur. Many people, who would never think of taking a foolish chance at work, seem to have no problem laying it all on the line for a meaningless pick-up game. Many injuries occur when we "overdo it" in this manner.
- Just as there are several types of personal protective equipment that protect us at work, many summertime activities also require protective equipment. Make sure you understand what protective gear is required for whatever activity you participate in and wear it – helmet for cycling, catcher's mask, life preserver, etc.

OUTDOOR COOKING

- Barbecue and grill mishaps result in more than 4,500 fires and 500 injuries each year; don't let a fun activity like outdoor cooking be spoiled by a needless injury.
- Before using a gas grill for the first time each outdoor cooking season, make sure the cylinder hose and fittings don't have any leaks. Turn the gas on slowly and then apply a soapy water solution to the hose and connections. Bubbles will appear if there is a leak. If you discover a leak, turn the gas off and make repairs. Do not use a grill that has a gas leak!
- Gas and charcoal grills must only be used outdoors. (If used indoors or inside a tent, they pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing people to toxic gases.) Place the grill in an open area and out of pedestrian traffic. Establish a three-foot safe zone around the grill and make sure children understand they are not to enter this zone.

- If a gas grill doesn't light right away, turn off the gas and allow the gas to dissipate before attempting to relight.
- Never leave a lit grill unattended. Have someone else bring you supplies if you are the designated cook or chef.
- Never add lighter fluid to a charcoal fire once the coals have already been ignited and never use any other type of fluid to ignite the fire other than lighter fluid approved for grilling.

YARD WORK

Summer additionally means cutting grass, weeding, starting outdoor yard and home repair projects which, not surprisingly, are also a source of summer time injuries.

- Be familiar with how to operate lawn maintenance equipment by reading the operator and maintenance manual before using it.
- Dress appropriately for the job. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeve shirts and long pants to protect from thorns, poisonous plants, debris thrown from lawn mowers or power yard tools. Always wear any PPE recommended by the equipment manufacturer such as safety glasses, ear plugs and gloves. Do not operate a lawnmower or powered lawn maintenance equipment while barefoot.
- Before using a mower, pick up sticks, rocks, glass and other debris from your lawn. These items could be thrown by the mower with such force that they have the power of a rifle bullet.
- Make sure the mower is in good working order. If it is hard to start, take it to a mower shop and have it tuned-up or fixed. Check the gas and oil. If the gasoline is left over from last summer and you didn't use a fuel stabilizer, it will need to be changed.
- Young children should never be in the yard while you are mowing, and they should not operate lawn maintenance equipment until they can understand their hazards, proper use and are large enough to adequately control the equipment. More than 1,000 children are run over or backed over by lawn mowers each year.
- Never allow passengers, other than the operator, on riding mowers.
- Make sure the grass is dry. Wet or damp grass can cause a slip and fall accident where you can be run over or slide under the mower.
- When cutting hills or slopes, cut across the slope and not up and down the slope. Slopes that are steeper than 10% should not be cut by a power mower.
- Never override the emergency shutoff by removal or taping in the on position.
- If the mower becomes clogged, remember even with the motor turned off, the blade remains engaged. Always use a stick or broom handle to remove any obstruction. Never insert hands or feet into the mower to remove grass or debris.
- Disconnect the spark plug before placing hands or any part of the body under the mower or before turning it up to look under it to sharpen the blade for example.
- Before refueling gasoline-powered tools, allow 20 minutes for the engine to cool down before fueling. Never try to fill the tank while equipment is running. Also, be sure to refuel machinery outdoors in an area with good ventilation and only store gas in an approved storage container.
- Never use electric-powered tools in wet or damp conditions. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protective devices are recommended when using outdoor electrical-powered tools and equipment to help prevent electric shock injuries.

- Always inspect extension cords for damage before use. Never use cords with exposed wires, cuts or nicks in the insulation or those with the ground pin missing.

SWIMMING SAFETY

- Whether we flock to a pool, river, lake or beaches to cool off don't go alone - take a buddy. Small children and non-swimmers should not be allowed to go around the water without supervision.
- Don't swim out beyond your ability to safely swim back and be sure to alert yourself to local conditions such as drop-offs, currents and rip-tides, or wildlife (snakes, gators, jelly fish, sharks) that may make swimming unsafe.
- Never dive into water unless you know it is deep enough and that there are no obstructions. Many serious neck and spinal cord injuries occur from diving into water that is too shallow.

SAFE BOATING

- Be aware of the unique operating and handling characteristics of the various types of watercraft you may operate – boat, canoe, kayak, pontoon. Also you must know the very specific “rules of the road” governing their operation. It's a good idea to take a boating safety course to learn the rules of safe watercraft operation before operating any watercraft. In fact, many areas now require it. At a minimum, the following are guidelines:
 - When meeting another boat head-on, it should be passed on your left or “port” side.
 - When meeting another boat at an angle, the boat on the right or “starboard” side has the right of way. Remember the saying “right is right”.
 - When overtaking another watercraft, the boat being passed has the right of way.
 - In normal circumstances, the boat with the right of way should maintain its course and speed; it's up to the other vessel to adjust course and speed to avoid a collision and maintain a safe operating distance.
 - Of course, all boat operators have a duty to avoid collisions, even if you think you have the right of way. Never force the issue. If it becomes apparent that the other boat is not yielding, take steps to avoid a collision.
- Before leaving the dock, everyone in the boat must have and should be fitted with a life jacket.
- Don't overload your boat. Boats have a capacity plate, mounted in plain view, which when not exceeded help ensure the boat remains safely stable.
- When going boating, tell someone on land where you plan to go and when you plan to return. This person can alert the authorities in case you do not return on time.
- Do not allow passengers to ride on the bow or gunwales. This is not only dangerous, but also illegal in most areas.
- Stay focused when driving the boat by looking out for and avoiding other boats, swimmers and obstacles.
- Maintain a safe speed for the conditions present and obey posted speed limits. Remember a boat has no brakes. Slow careful operation is the key to safe maneuvering around docks and other boats.
- Personal watercraft (jet skis) are popular, fast, fun and dangerous. They look simple to operate but can quickly lead a novice driver into dangerous situations. Have a skilled person instruct you in operation of the vehicle and read the operator's manual before heading out on the lake or waterfront.

- Many novice drivers get into trouble when they find themselves heading straight for a hazard and instinctively let go of the throttle to reduce speed. Unfortunately, when the throttle is off, the stream of water is stopped and then the vessel cannot be steered, often leading to a collision.
- Operate personal water craft in open water, well clear of shore, docks, other vessels and swimmers. Always ride in control and in a predictable manner. Riding in a weaving, circular, and random pattern, especially in crowded waterways, makes it impossible for other boaters to predict which way you may go. Also, zipping back and forth to jump the wake of another boat, which is illegal in many areas, places you in a blind spot to other boaters who may not be expecting you to suddenly appear in front of them.
- Never drink alcohol while operating any type of watercraft. Just like driving a car, alcohol impedes your judgment and abilities and places everyone around you in danger.

UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY

Summer vacations often take us out of our normal environment to unfamiliar territory. When traveling or visiting new and different areas, we most likely are not familiar with unique hazards and safety rules that apply. It's a good idea to do a little research before traveling. For example:

- A nice looking stretch of beach may have dangerous currents and under tow.
- Other states can have different motor vehicle laws such as not having a "right turn on red" law or requiring motorcycle drivers and passengers to wear helmets.
- Many people play golf while traveling, and wouldn't think twice about retrieving a ball from the edge of a water trap, but the locals know better and gladly let the resident alligators keep any wayward balls.
- A quick hike before sunset can be the end of a perfect day of camping. Just be sure you take the 1-mile trail that loops back to camp rather than the 10-mile expert trail that leads over the mountain and has no water along the way.
- Personal fireworks may be legal in your home community but illegal at your vacation destination.

FIREWORKS

Using consumer fireworks on our nation's birthday is as American as apple pie and can be safe if a few common sense rules are followed.

- An adult should always closely supervise teens using fireworks. Young children should not handle or use fireworks.
- Only use outdoors.
- Know your fireworks. Read the caution label before igniting. Report illegal explosives, like M-80s and quarter sticks or homemade, to the fire or police department.
- Obey local laws. If fireworks are not legal where you live or vacation, do not use them. Alcohol and fireworks do not mix.
- Wear safety glasses.
- Always remain standing while using sparklers. Never throw sparklers. Teach children not to wave sparklers, or run, while holding sparklers.
- Never hold a child in your arms while using sparklers.

- Never hold, or light, more than one sparkler at a time.
- Never try to relight a “dud” firework. Always have water ready. Wait 20 minutes then place the dud in the bucket of water. Soak spent fireworks with water before placing them in an outdoor garbage can. After burning the sparkler wire and stick remain hot long after the flame has gone out. Be sure to drop spent sparklers in a bucket of water.

Enjoy the summer. Have fun! Please be safe doing it.